GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1950
ANSWERED ON:04.08.2003
BETEL CROP
DINESH CHANDRA YADAV

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a number of farmers in Bihar are dependent on the farming of betel leaves for their livelihood;

(b) whether the Government are aware the betel crop was destroyed during the cold wave last year;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Government propose to immediately stop the recovery of loans and provide various relief measures to the farmers; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV)

(a)to(c): Betelvine is cultivated in 18 districts of Bihar in an area of 2,500 ha. Bihar Government has reported that they are conducting survey to assess the details of crop damage due to cold wave.

(d)&(e): No proposal has been received from Government of Bihar seeking assistance from Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) and National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) for damage to betelvine crop. However, there are standing guidelines of Reserve Bank of India for providing relief to farmers in areas affected by natural calamities which includes conversion/rescheduling of loans; grant of fresh crop loans; grant of consumption loans; conversion of principle as well as interest due on existing loans; not to compound interest in respect of converted/rescheduled loans; and not to charge penal interest in respect of current dues in default. Government of India is also implementing a National Agricultural Insurance Scheme under which eligible farmers are entitled to receive compensation for crop loss due to natural calamities. Government of Bihar, however, has reported that the situation was reviewed and steps have been taken to provide relief measures for the benefit of betelvine growers.